



Northern Great Plains Network

Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

August 2003



FY04 Budget: Well I know nothing more than I did last month in regards to our FY04 budget. We should again get \$197k for inventories (with FY04 our last year for these dollars). The question is what will we get in monitoring (i.e., base) funds; the numbers I hear most are \$150k (same as we got this fiscal year) or \$250k (an incremental increase but far short of our full funding of around \$900k). Stay tuned.

Field Inventories: Herp inventories are still continuing, primarily at the Niobrara NSR and the Missouri NRR. Plant inventories are also ongoing at Fort Union Trading Post NHS and Fort Laramie NHS. The automated wildlife cameras for documenting mammals will continue to be in the field until the snow flies. Once again, I'm happy to report that the field inventories are resulting in many noteworthy finds. For example, the herp work on the Missouri NRR has resulted in several range extensions and new county records.

Biological Technician Position: Dr. Marcia Wilson EOD'd on September 7. She is quickly getting up to speed on the I&M Program, with emphasis on NPSpecies. (Since Marcia graciously volunteered to attend the National I&M meeting back in August she came on board already familiar with the program.) All the feedback I've gotten to date in regards to Marcia being the Network's Point-of-Contact for NPSpecies has been positive so I will designate her for that role. Marcia's phone number is 605 574-3143 and her email is Marcia_Wilson@nps.gov.

Data Manager Position: This long overdue position should be in the hands of OPM this week. It will be advertised at the GS-9/11 level, multi-disciplinary, and open to all sources. It will be open for 3 weeks.

Development of the Aquatic Portion of Vital Signs Plan: The agreement with Dr. Nels Troelstrup of South Dakota State University to develop the aquatic portion of our Vital Signs plan has been completed and all the funds obligated through the CESU. Dr. Troelstrup has informed me that he has a graduate student on board for the project. It's possible that Dr. Troelstrup and the student may get to one or two parks this fall, but they most likely will not get going full speed until this winter.

Development of Plant Portion of Vital Signs Plan: Dr. Amy Symstad has met with staff from Theodore Roosevelt NP and Jewel Cave NM to discuss vegetation resources, stressors and issues, and potential indicators. Over the next few months Amy, Marcia and I hope to visit all parks and conduct 2-hour meetings that 1) bring all senior park staff up to date on the I&M Program, and, 2) discuss park resources, stressors to those resources, and potential indicators.

Vouchers: In August I deposited 110 vouchers with the Bell Museum at the University of Minnesota (the actual number of individual specimens was greater because some vouchers contain numerous individuals, e.g., several small fish in one jar). The specimens were from Scotts Bluff NM, Fort Laramie NHS, Badlands NP, Devils Tower NM, and Mount Rushmore NMEM. An additional 19 shrews will be sent there shortly (after genetic analysis by a grad student at Fort Hays State University). I understand there are still some specimens at parks that need to be sent to the Bell; contact me if your park has some.

Network Technical Committee: The Network Technical Committee had it's first conference call on August 4. The minutes of that call have been distributed to the Committee for review.